

***Baby Bear Sees Blue*, by Ashley Wolff. 2014. Board book edition. New York: Little Simon. 42 pp.**

***Backseat A-B-See*, by Maria van Lieshout. 2014. Board book edition. San Francisco: Chronicle Books. 30 pp.**

***Dim Sum for Everyone!*, by Grace Lin. 2014. Board book edition. New York: Knopf Books for Young Readers. 24 pp.**

***No Two Alike*, by Keith Baker. 2014. Board book edition. New York: Little Simon. 36 pp.**

***Rah, Rah, Radishes! A Vegetable Chant*, by April Pulley Sayre. 2014. Board book edition. New York: Little Simon. 34 pp.**

***We're Going on a Bear Hunt*, by Michael Rosen. Illus. by Helen Oxenbury. 2014. Lap book edition. New York: Little Simon. 36 pp.**

All books above: Ages birth to 3.

These favorite titles are being released in board book format for the first time. Converting hardcover books into board book editions is becoming more and more popular. A favorite hardcover book often makes an excellent board book. If the language is simple enough and the illustrations aren't too complex, it makes sense to publish the story in a smaller, sturdier format for infants and toddlers. *Rah, Rah, Radishes!* offers a rollicking, rhyming feast of vegetables with clear photos and simple content, pleasing to even the youngest ears and supporting young children as they learn to eat real foods. *We're Going on a Bear Hunt* features rhythmic text and a straightforward plot that toddlers will enjoy, and the new format (an oversized board book, called a lap book) makes the illustrations more accessible. Each book in the list above is appropriate in board edition for similar reasons.

But be careful when choosing other board book editions of your favorite hardcovers. If you wouldn't read the original hardcover to infants or toddlers, don't read the board book edition, either. Avoid titles that are text heavy or that have intricate illustrations that would be better suited to a full-size page.

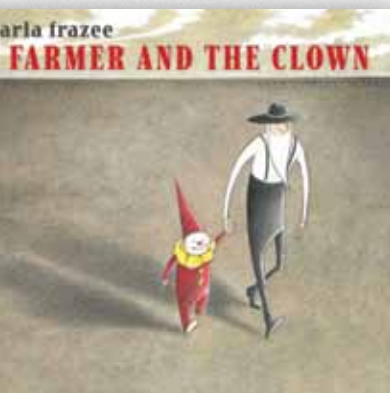
***Blizzard*, by John Rocco. 2014. New York: Hyperion. 40 pp. Ages 3 to 8.**

Based on a true story from the famous 1978 Northeast blizzard, this is the tale of a boy who makes the most of a huge snowstorm. First, he watches with anticipation as it develops. The snow keeps on coming down! Then, the waiting begins. As his family waits for the snowplows to dig them out, the boy and his sister dig tunnels and secret rooms under the pileup. They sip hot cocoa with their parents around the fireplace. It's as if time stands still for them, and they're trapped in a magic world. Being snowbound gets old fast, though, especially as food starts running low. Thankfully, the boy has been browsing his Arctic Survival guide every day, and he comes up with a plan. He fashions snowshoes out of tennis rackets and trudges atop the snow to the store to buy staples for his family and his neighbors. Kick off the winter with this wonderful tale of childhood bravery and adventure!

***The Farmer and the Clown*, by Marla Frazee. 2014. San Diego: Beach Lane Books. 32 pp. Ages 3 to 8.**

This stunning wordless story is as stirring as it is silent. When a travelling circus passes through on a train, a toddler clown falls out the back and is rescued by a lonely farmer who isn't sure what to do with him. The situation is almost comical given the wide clown grin painted on the toddler's face. But when the paint washes off in the bath, the farmer discovers a very different face underneath—that of a scared and confused tot. Suddenly, this absurd story feels very real. The farmer tries his hardest to comfort the boy.

Readers will experience a range of feelings for each of the characters in the book. Both the farmer and the toddler are at points lonely and abandoned, yet both find themselves rescued by love and companionship. In the end, the clown family returns for its little one, and the farmer finds a companion, too, resulting in a satisfying ending. Frazee's masterful illustrations are made with clean lines, packed with depth and emotion.



***I Pledge Allegiance*, by Pat Mora and Libby Martinez. Illus. by Patricia Barton. 2014. New York: Knopf. 36 pp. Ages 4 to 8.**

Learning the Pledge of Allegiance is a family affair for young Libby and her aunt, Lobo, who just passed her citizenship test and will recite the pledge at her swearing-in ceremony. At the same time, Libby's class is learning the pledge, too. Together, Libby and Lobo practice and talk about what it means to put your hand to your heart and speak those words. With pride, Lobo also tells Libby the story of how she came to America, sprinkling in Spanish words as she recounts her journey from Mexico.

Inspired by their own aunt's immigration story (described in a note at the back), authors Mora and Martinez craft a wonderful story that will encourage children to learn this pledge of patriotism and understand what it means to arrive from another country and become an American—like so many Americans have. This book is practical and inspirational.

***Tumbleweed Baby*, by Anna Myers. Illus. by Charles Vess. 2014. New York: Abrams. 32 pp. Ages 4 to 8.**

The Upagainstit Family is just that—up against it. They don't have much: just a falling-down house in a barren spot in Nowhere, Texas. But when a wild child rolls in on a tumbleweed, their abundant generosity shines. The siblings try to calm the rambunctious girl. When it looks like they're better off giving her up, they find a silver lining: "Chasing after her will make me faster for recess races," says a brother, and "getting her to like stories will be good practice for being a teacher when I grow up," says a sister. Mama and Papa can't see letting her go.

Each child in the family is heard, including the youngest daughter, who wishes the Tumbleweed Baby would go away. Her resentment adds just enough sourness to make the story real, not saccharine.

The premise of the book is original and strange, yet the way the characters are rendered makes the tale believable. It's a beautiful adoption story—if an abstract one—about unconditional love and finding a family that can't help but want you.

Isabel Baker, MAT, MLS, is president of The Book Vine for Children, a national company dedicated to getting good books into the hands of young children and their teachers. Isabel has worked as a children's librarian and is currently a presenter on early literacy and book selection.

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The Reading Chair is available at www.naeyc.org/yc/columns.

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